

*Where do we go
from here?*

INFORMATION FOR LIBERATED PRISONERS OF WAR, WAR DEPARTMENT PAMPHLET No. 21-28

WAR DEPARTMENT

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

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Refer to FM 21-6 for explanation of distribution formula.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



WAR DEPARTMENT

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*Information for Liberated
Prisoners of War . . .*

This little pamphlet outlines what lies ahead of you for the next month or so. Read it and hang on to it, and if there are any parts which are not clear to you, ask for further information at the first meeting of the discussion group at this Replacement Depot.

FREE AGAIN

Your Army realizes that you have been through an unusual experience, and will do all it can to help you. However, the United States needed you when you went on duty, and it needs you now. You may still be able to contribute greatly toward winning the War. Because your country values you and your services, the Army is taking extra care to help you with your special problems—to help

you get into tip-top shape, to give you a chance to get your personal affairs straightened out, to let you know what's been going on while you were a prisoner, to let you know what lies immediately ahead of you, and about your eventual return to peacetime living after final victory.

You must realize that some of the details about what's going to happen to you, for reasons of military security (which you, even better than most soldiers, will understand) are confidential, but we will give you the broad outlines here and tell you more later.

AT THE REPLACEMENT DEPOT

You will be here at this Replacement Depot for the shortest possible time, dependent on the availability of transportation home. It is impossible to say how many days, because travel facilities vary; but we can tell you that you have priority over all other personnel, except sick and wounded. In order that nothing will delay you when transports are available, administrative processing will be kept to an absolute minimum.

You should obtain at the Replacement Depot or subsequent station two basic records and keep them with you at all times, your Pay Record (WD AGO Form 28) and your Immunization Register (WD AGO Form 8-117) (formerly MD Form 81). If you have lost your Immunization Register, you need not worry about getting all your shots over again! It is assumed that if you got over here in the first place, you had your shots completed for this theater. And a word about your Pay Record: You can get partial payments in advance while you are here, or at subsequent stations. Remember you want your pay when you get home. Too many partial payments will mean that when your pay account is brought up to date there will be a big hole in it. So draw only what you need. Any pay you may have received from the enemy, for work or otherwise, will not be deducted from your accrued pay.

If you are an officer, you should obtain your WD AGO Form 65 (Identification Card) and WD AGO Form 66-1 (Qualification Card), and WD AGO Form 77 (Pay Data); all of these will be furnished you at the Replacement Depot. If you are on flight

status, you should obtain and carry that record, and your rating card.

If any record is missing, you should get a duplicate from the personnel officer.

Your immediate medical and dental needs will be taken care of, and you will have a thorough medical examination.

When you had been reported missing, your unit collected all of your stuff that it could find, and sent it back to the States in care of the Effects Quartermaster at Kansas City, Missouri. If it arrived safely, it has been kept there until now. If you were only recently taken prisoner, however, your possessions may still be en route. The Effects Quartermaster will send whatever personal belongings of yours he has to your home in the States. You may take home from here, in addition to your authorized clothing and equipment, a maximum of 25 pounds of personal items, trophies, souvenirs. Get a certificate (in duplicate) saying that you are authorized by the theater commander to retain these trophies. The customs people will take the duplicate, you retain the original. See Section III, WD Circular 353, 1944, Certificate from Theater.

You need not worry about notifying your family. The AGO in Washington has been told of your liberation, and The Adjutant General notified your family or your emergency addressee. You may, of course, now write as many letters as you want to; you're done with that one letter a week business. If you have been mistreated while in a Prisoner of War Camp, or if you have knowledge of others who have been mistreated, and if the information has not already been given to an appropriate officer, now is the time to speak to the post judge advocate. All irregularities and abuses will be investigated. Before you leave, you will be told what not to talk about. There are lots of things the enemy is anxious to learn—information which he can use to make life tougher for the men still in his hands.

You will be returned by transport; a few may go by air. Priority will be given to medical cases. While you are waiting here, and while on the transport, informal talks and discussions will be held to help you catch up on all the news you've missed. For example, there are discussions on what lies ahead of you, what's been going

on at home, the picture on the military fronts, and so on. You'll get a chance to learn about the benefits that the country has provided for you and all other servicemen through the GI Bill of Rights. You are entitled to free education, Government guaranteed loans and allowances should you become unemployed. In addition to these other benefits, there is your mustering out pay when the time comes for you to receive your discharge papers. You'll have an opportunity to get some of the straight facts, not distorted by the enemy. There will be showings of recent movies, which you may see if you want to. But this program of bringing you up to date will in no way delay your return; as soon as transportation is ready, you will go.

By the way, here is another angle, in case you're interested. If you desire, you may request permission to remain overseas. However, your request must be approved by the theater commander before you will be permitted to stay.

While at this Replacement Depot and on the transport you all will be kept together as a provisional company. Someone will be appointed to head up each group going back home.

ON THE TRANSPORT

And then you are on board the ship. How comfortable the trip is will depend on how lucky you are in the ship assigned to you. About three men out of every four who have been making the trip recently say they had a good trip and good accommodations.

There may be things about the boat trip which are not perfect. The boat may be crowded and your quarters may be cramped. You may find that because of the difficulties of cooking and serving chow for so many men, only two meals a day are served. The Army figures you all want to get back home and that you'll prefer to go soon and forego some conveniences than to wait longer.

AT THE PORT OF DEBARKATION

When you get back to the States, you'll land at a port of debarkation. You won't be there long. Your hold baggage will be delivered to you and customs will be waived. And you'll be reminded again of what not to talk about. Then you'll be moving

again. If you are sick or wounded you'll go to a debarkation hospital, a special hospital to take care of processing overseas men; if you are well, you'll go to a reception station. Both places have very similar procedures.

Your family won't be at the docks to meet you. The War Department has found that if relatives of men returning wait about the port, the business of getting soldiers out to the reception stations and to their homes is delayed many hours.

AT THE RECEPTION STATION

There are about 18 reception stations, serving the 48 states, and you will be sent to the one which serves the place where you plan to spend your furlough. Even before you get off the ship, your family will have been notified what reception station you are going to, and from there you'll be able to phone or wire them. You will probably be at the reception station about 2 days, for there are a few things you'll want to do:

1. You will get new issues of *clothing*. (If you are an officer, you will find PXs and commissaries where you can buy yours.) And incidentally, you may keep on wearing your old shoulder patch until you join a new outfit later.

2. There'll be a quick *laundry* and cleaning service so that you can go home looking pretty sharp.

3. You'll be able to get whatever *ribbons* and *awards* are due you, if you have lost any medals you had previously, you can get new ones.

Now what else have you to do before you get that furlough?

4. You want your back *pay*. You'll get it, probably before you leave and in any event by check within a few days after reaching home. And it's a good idea to take that money in the form of a check. It's not so easy to lose. Take what cash you need to get home and the finance officer will be glad to mail you a Government check for the balance.

5. You're going home to a land of rationing, so you'll need *ration coupons*—gas, and food, and maybe a shoe certificate. You'll get them there.

By the morning of the third day, if not sooner, you should have your furlough papers in your hand, and be heading home. The Army pays for your travel from the reception station to the redistribution station, but not from the reception station to your home.

If you are sick or wounded you will get a minimum of 30 days on sick leave or convalescent furlough.

AT THE REDISTRIBUTION STATION

You'll report back after your furlough to what is called a "redistribution station." You may bring your wife at your own expense, but no facilities can be provided for any other members of your family. You will have a very thorough medical examination, to see exactly what shape you're in, and what treatments, if any, you'll need. If you lost any *personal property* when taken prisoner, you may put in a claim for it through the post judge advocate. You will have an opportunity to talk over with an expert classifier just what you have done and what you would like to do. This is a regular procedure for all returnees. Several things may

happen to you: You may need to spend some time in a hospital or convalescent center, but most likely you will be assigned right back to duty. You may continue in your present arm or service, or you may be retrained in another Army skill. It all depends on what job the Army needs you for. But every effort will be made to assign you to the work for which you are best qualified.

At the redistribution station, in addition to this personal interviewing and necessary medical treatment, your records are rechecked and brought up to date. You will have an opportunity to discuss again the problems of the Home Front—it will seem very close to you now—and such things as the GI Bill of Rights. You may be there for a week or two, but, excepting for the time consumed in processing, you are on your own. Because the facilities of these redistribution stations vary, you'll be told more about what to expect of them at the reception station before you leave on furlough.

From the redistribution station you will be sent to your new Army job or given the option of discharge, subject to your Adjusted Service Rating Card. Good luck, soldier!

